

The Corps of Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

Canadian Land Ordnance Engineers in Vietnam, 1973



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**By Members of the ICCS (Vietnam)
LORE Team**

The ICCS

On January 27, 1973, the parties participating in the Paris Conference signed an agreement on ending the war and restoring peace in Vietnam, and to this end established an International Commission of Control and Supervision (ICCS). Canada provided about 280 members of the latter, of whom 11 were Land Ordnance Engineer (LORE) officers and men.

These LORE officers and men played a significant part in many tasks from the beginning of the planning for the operation in late 1972 until the last man returned and the final report was submitted in the late summer of 1973. They worked in many locations throughout South Vietnam, from Quang Tri in the North to Can Tho in the Southern Mekong Delta. Working at the headquarters of the Military Component of the Canadian Delegation (HQ, MCCD), the ICCS Secretariat, Region HQs, and team sites, their assignments covered a wide spectrum ranging from region commanders, operations

and support staffs, to control team members.

Major-General D. A. McAlpine, the commander of the MCCD, ICCS, notes that his men gained "an immense amount of knowledge and expertise, not only of truce observing operations, but about troop deployments, support activities, and other related skills. It had tremendous impact being in a war zone . . . it was a source of experience and training . . . a test for all we prepare ourselves for . . . a tremendous training ground." Much of what they learned and experienced has continuing value. This article highlights some of those experiences.

The peace agreement called for the exchange of prisoners, limitations on the entry of war materiel, departure of U.S. troops, dismantling of their bases, guarantees of civil liberties, etc. There was to be a Joint Military Commission (JMC) to keep the peace, and an International Commission of Control and Supervision (ICCS) to provide observers. Initially, there was a four-party JMC having delegations from the Democratic

Republic of Vietnam (DRVN), the United States of America, the Provisional Revolutionary Republic of Vietnam (RVN), and Government of the Republic of South Vietnam (PRG). After 60 days, coinciding with the completion of the U.S. withdrawal, this organization was disbanded and a two-party JMC was formed on which only the RVN and the PRG were represented. The ICCS had delegations from Canada, Hungary, Indonesia, and Poland, the "CHIP Nations" as they were colloquially termed.

The JMC and ICCS were to work together. They had parallel organizations, a HQ in Saigon and seven regions, each of which had from two to six areas. Each ICCS delegation provided a specified number of personnel to the ICCS HQ, to region teams, to the control teams, and to the support of the HQ and the teams. The control teams operated in designated areas or specified locations, and worked on prisoner/detainee exchanges, point of entry duties, or investigations as directed. At the ICCS control team level the JMC had Joint Military Teams (JMT). In practice

each delegation also formed its own HQ in Saigon from available personnel to provide support on national matters. An IC-CS Secretariat was formed later from available personnel to provide parallel support on a Commission basis. A contractor, Pacific Architects and Engineers (PAE), was to provide support services for the HQ and teams.

HQ, MCCD had an operations and support staff. It provided command and control of Canadian personnel and support on a national basis for such items as pay, medical services, personnel administration, and clothing. In addition, it provided support to the Commission as a whole for maintenance, transportation, and construction. The Canadian delegations (CANDEL) to each region team comprised a commander, an SS operations, two operations staff officers and an SSO support*. A clerk, field engineer and a medical assistant were added from the support allocation. The CANDEL of each control team comprised two officers of major/captain rank. The Canadian contribution was at the start of the planning contribution assigned the code name GALLANT.

Planning and Advance Party

In early December 1972, Lt.-Col. R. B. Screation of LORE was assigned to the Operation GALLANT staff to take part in the

*There was also a Department of External Affairs (DEA) officer in some regions. In fact, in the three regions in which there was a DEA officer on the team, he acted as head of the delegation. The region commander was his military adviser, and in particular was responsible for the operational aspects of investigations and the personal safety of team members. In the remaining four regions, the region commander headed the delegation, there being no DEA officer.



Negotiations between ICCS team and North Vietnamese officers in Region VI.

planning for a possible Canadian deployment to South Vietnam as part of a new supervision and control commission. The planning staff also included Major J. D. McDougall and Capt. G. W. Godson who were at the start assigned to a maintenance cell. As is usual in such initial planning, many contingencies, roles, and force sizes had to be considered as possible options. At that time, the peace negotiations were under way and our planners had little idea of what the accords and protocols would require. Initial options included formation of a theatre base, similar to a service battalion operation.

Several options for force size ranging from a couple of thousand to a few hundred had to be worked out. Since the planning staff was small, the LORE members quickly became involved in all aspects, and this involved a few all-night sessions working out manning slates for the options. They also worked out equipment tables and materiel "shopping lists" of items to be

procured in Vietnam. This work eventually proved invaluable.

Therefore, as the first group was preparing to leave, work began in the theatre of operations to assemble ICCS requirements. Materiel sent to Vietnam from Canada was limited primarily to individual items, clothing, personal weapons. Materiel provided in-country included radios, vehicles, accommodation stores.

Plans were changed as information came in from the peace conference in Paris. Even while the Canadian group was being assembled in Montreal, there was a major change: the number of regions was increased from four to seven. This caused a reduction in the support organization, particularly at region headquarters. Initially each region was to have a support officer, clerk, field engineer, and vehicle technician. The vehicle technicians had to be dropped and hasty reassignments made as the group assembled. Fortunately, this was completed before emplaning so that seating was by assignment. Thus, much valu-

able initial planning and familiarization was done during the trip to Vietnam. As one member notes in retrospect, "We were given a moment to compile a platoon commander's notebook and read and discuss information on our forthcoming duties—a moment we sorely needed after the rush of preparatory briefings, themselves hastily abbreviated by the caprices of the cease-fire negotiations."

While preparations were being finalized in Montreal, Capt. Godson departed for Saigon as part of a two-man advance party of the MCCD. They were to confirm initial support for the Canadians, to assess the situation "in-country" for transportation, accommodation, and messing for the MCCD for the first few days. This task was done immediately on their arrival, no time for acclimatization being allowed.

The shopping list now came in handy and equipment for the Commission was assembled. When the first group of the delegation arrived at 0330 hours on Jan. 29, Capt. Godson was there to greet them. This group comprised HQ MCCD staff and regional HQ members. The second group, which arrived in mid-February comprised the control team members.

Headquarters

Within hours of landing on January 29, the HQ MCCD was in operation. It somewhat resembled a battle group HQ, but with some refinements; the end result was an organization that was somewhere between a battle group HQ and a U.N. observer group HQ, as described in DND handbook on peacekeeping. Operational components consisted of the commander and his deputy, operations staff general, plans staff, data staff (intelligence staff), a staff officer air, communications group, security

group, an analysis staff, and a small orderly room. Because of limited total manpower, personnel had to be used economically. Thus, the deputy commander (chief of staff) was designated as a regional commander for the Saigon Gia-Dinh area. Team officers in that region had to be used as operations staff officers, and the small plans staff came from the ICCS Secretariat operations staff which, incidentally, never became fully operational during the Canadian stay. In general, the situation that faces most observer groups repeated itself, in that there was need for great flexibility and resourcefulness to set up a HQ to satisfy a situation not previously encountered.

Initially, the first priority of the two-officer plans staff was to develop deployment plans, to ensure that regional HQ and team sites were established as quickly as possible in accordance with the Protocols. Once the HQs were deployed, the reception and indoctrination of the second group, mainly team site members, became the prime concern. The occupation of team sites was dictated by, firstly, suitable accommodation and security at the site and, secondly, the ability of the various regional HQs to accept, house and brief their new members. Considerable staff liaison had to be effected to try and ensure uniform delegation deployment by all four countries.

The training program for the second group became a full-time effort, the more so as it was necessary to stay abreast all the time of the rapidly changing team site availability status. Fortunately, a one-week period after arrival, set aside for that purpose, allowed acclimatization, equipping and training to proceed reasonably smoothly before deployments commenced.

A third activity that caused some frustration because it had

not been anticipated was that of revising the manning plans to stay within the 280-man ceiling, and yet producing the right mix of second group personnel to satisfy the commander's tasks. The plans and the personnel staff of the support HQ spent many hours adjusting and revising schedules and securing agreement with the External Affairs staff and the commander on who should or should not come on the next flight. At one point, a suggestion of trading one padre for two technicians seemed like a pretty good solution to a real maintenance problem.

A significant point that arose out of initial deployment plans was the need for accurately written and legally constructed documents to send to all delegations. In purely Canadian operations, an "O" group would suffice for routine activities and relatively simple plan details. In Vietnam, in order to ensure that results could be accurately determined or at least the directions given identified at a later date, written orders were always produced. This particular facet of operations was to prove invaluable in the later months of the contingent's activities.

The scenario of the ICCS operation necessitated coverage of all aspects of a problem, that is, the diplomatic and political as well as military. The thorough research involved caused delays to which the military staff, used to being given reasonably clear-cut directions and then a free hand to proceed, had to become accustomed.

When deployment plans were progressing reasonably smoothly, the contingency plans for evacuation were reviewed to ensure that they remained valid now that we were on the ground and deployed. Although there was little doubt in anyone's mind in South Vietnam that any and

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all means of evacuation, from junks to helicopters and chartered transport aircraft would be used, it was less easy to put this fact into a plan acceptable to NDHQ. Factors such as team site location, season of the year, state of co-operation of the RVN and PRG forces and, the most unpredictable factor, that of safe passage to a specified pick-up point, were but a few of the variables. Roads and air corridors controlled by one side by day could be totally impassable by night, since control only too often shifted at dusk.

Notwithstanding the limitations, an air evacuation plan was the main theme until HMCS *Terra Nova* was despatched into the South China Sea. It then became imperative to determine suitable ports that were still usable and for which accurate charts could be obtained. U.S. port authorities, as well as other naval staffs, were most helpful, but as any evacuation based on the *Terra Nova* would probably involve smaller craft to reach pick-up points, the support of South Vietnamese craft had to be assumed, it being impractical to seek formal agreement on such matters. The plans staff had to admit that there was a chance of getting wet whatever sea evacuation plans were devised, short of docking in ports not necessarily in secure hands, friendly to the ICCS, and to Canadians in particular. Several briefings of the *Terra Nova* staff and her replacement ship served to resolve many problems, including communications, and resulted in a general approval of an evacuation plan based on shore pick-ups. Fortunately, the plan never had to be put into practice.

It was not long after arrival that the subject of Point of Entry (POE) was assigned to the plans staff. The Protocols permitted the replacement of mun-



*Investigation on the spot in Region IV.
ICCS and South Vietnamese officers.*

itions and equipment on a one-for-one basis but only through centres recognized by both S. Vietnamese parties for that purpose. Initially, 12 sites were designated in the Protocols, with another 7 permitted, provided that both parties agreed. Not all of the POE were occupied, nor were all of them declared legitimate for the entry of munitions and equipment. The control mechanism to ensure compliance with the Protocol was clearly stated to be the responsibility of the two parties, with the IC CS assuming the observer/investigator/reporter role. No comprehensive instructions were ever worked out, though, that would satisfy both parties; consequently, one of the initial and most important ICCS tasks was to set up at least its own operating and reporting procedures.

It was hoped that procedures developed by the Canadian staff would be adopted by the ICCS, and be used until such time as the two parties could come up with their own detailed scheme. The Canadian draft never got to

be approved, however, although some intricate political footwork was attempted to this end. Working with a DEA officer also assigned to the task was interesting. A review of old International Control Commission (ICC) procedures, especially of the years 1954 to 1957, helped in identifying pitfalls to be avoided. Eventually, the prepared instructions were issued to all Canadian sites. Indonesia adopted the procedures as well, after a trial period.

One of the last jobs of the HQ, MCCD planners was to organize the rescue of two Canadian officers held by the PRG. Although the mechanics were straightforward enough, the side issues and the long hours of negotiations with the PRG were most interesting, to say the least. One such session lasted from 1900 hours one day to 0300 hours the next. The results of the effort are now history, but the political tactics, proposals and counter-proposals, terms of agreement and variations to those terms were fascinating and

somewhat related to a ping-pong game. They conformed with a pattern set up by the PRG, characterized by extreme precision in wording, attention to the minutest detail, and ever-present concern for the political implications of even the simplest agreements.

Regions

The region teams deployed from Saigon to their HQs on February 5. Colonel Screaton (he was promoted to that acting rank) went to Region 6 as commander. Lt.-Col. M. C. Johnston went to Region 7 as SSO support. In March, on promotion to acting colonel, he became its commander, and in mid-May, he succeeded Col. Screaton as commander in Region 6. The deployment was the first major contact at the working level between the delegations. This early period was marked by politeness and friendly social contacts. There was a concerted joint effort to get the regions set up and operating because the control teams were to arrive in mid-February. Operational procedures had to be devised and team sites built or renovated so that control teams, when they arrived, could be deployed quickly to their areas and begin the work of the Commission. In the Delta this was all completed by the end of February.

Each region team formed a Regional Executive Committee comprising the commanders of the four delegations. Chairmanship rotated weekly. The Committee authorized investigations, approved reports, gave overall direction within the region, and kept in contact with the local JMC region team. The chairman provided secretarial support to the Committee. On its behalf he received requests, convened meetings, promulgated reports, and kept up the operational log



The devastations of war: ICCS helicopter over the ruins of Quang Tri (Region I).

and situation board and map. Each delegation commander also kept a duplicate record as a back-up.

Once the control teams were deployed, requests for investigations started to come in. Requests in the Mekong Delta (Regions 6 and 7) took on their own characteristics which reflected the nature of the area. The Delta is the main food growing areas of the country and most of the land is under cultivation. It is heavily populated and was then strongly defended by the RVN. Incidents were mainly at the command/platoon level and below, with many individual terrorist acts, such as shootings, demolition damage, and the like. The trend indicated that the aim was to get control of the rice crop through intimidation of the local population. Incidents involving large-scale manoeuvres that were likely to destroy rice crops or cropland were rare.

The peace agreement required the ICCS to operate on the principles of consultation and unanimity. Hence only that which had the unanimous agreement of all four members could be used in ICCS reports. Differing national views could be sub-

mitted, but were not to be part of the reports. This unanimity requirement stood in the way of continuing Canadian efforts to action all requests for investigations, and get reports finished and forwarded as quickly as possible to the Commission for consideration.

Once investigation of alleged violations started, the critical importance soon became evident of viewing and assessing evidence immediately after an incident had occurred, so that it would not be disturbed and witnesses dispersed. The loss or degradation of evidence often affected the ability of a team to reach unanimous conclusions. In one classic example one morning in early March in Region 7, a small *cafe* (tin-covered bamboo-frame shack) in a small village near the U Minh forest was badly damaged, allegedly by a landmine. This was verbally reported by the local JMT to the ICCS control team. The team laboured several hours by path and canal to arrive at the village an hour before dusk. They found the building partially restored because the owner had to have a roof over his head for the night. Some doubt was raised as

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to whether the building had actually just fallen down rather than being blown up. Conclusions were not unanimous; the ensuing report was thus valueless.

The Canadians were accustomed to delegating authority. Hence their control team officers were empowered to initiate investigations locally with due regard to safety. The Poles and Hungarians, however, centralized this authority at region level. Consequently, the Canadians were able to react more quickly. In one typical case, a missile was fired into a small town in Region 6 near the Cambodian border. It struck a tree near the police station and exploded injuring several people and causing much damage. The ICCS control team site was nearby. The local JMT made a verbal request to investigate. The Poles and Hungarians waited for instructions from their commanders. The Canadians and Indonesians agreed to view the evidence immediately, and after a short wait they went out and inspected the damage before it was cleared up and the launching site in a field before it was disturbed. The problem here, however, was not only reaction time, but also unanimity. The validity of the evidence was disputed because it was collected by the Canadians and Indonesians only.

ICCS operating procedures specifically covered the ordering of investigations at the commission and region levels only. They did, however, not explicitly exclude team sites. In Regions 6 and 7, in order to gain unanimity, investigations were ordered at region level. It took time, however, to convey messages (especially since this had to be done in quadruplicate, as it were, once in each language), translate, and convene meetings.

For this reason, in order to allow team sites to collect usable, that is unanimous, evidence without delay, the idea of "observation" was devised. The commanders agreed that control teams could "observe" evidence on request of their local JMT, provided guarantees of safety were given. On the basis of the "observation", the commanders at the Regional Executive Committee level could then order a full-scale investigation.

The guarantees of safety became a troublesome point in Region 6. There were delays waiting for both of the JMC parties to give them, and this cancelled out the time gained by the adoption of the "observation" scheme. In Region 6, the PRG JMC never deployed, so that requests for guarantees of safety had to go to Saigon; replies, if any, usually took weeks to come back. After a lengthy discussion one day, the four region commanders in Region 6 agreed that certain areas (e.g. within one kilometer of the heavily defended Highway 4 cutting across the Region) were "safe" and control teams could, on their own initiative, go on an "observation" with local JMT escort.

In other areas (e.g. within 10 kilometers of team sites) written, unilateral guarantees from either the RVN or the PRG JMC were deemed sufficient. In the remaining areas (e.g. known contested localities), guarantees from both the RVN and the PRG JMC were required. This agreement allowed many "observations" to be unanimously started with minimum delay to be then followed in due course by the order to conduct an investigation.

The requirements for unanimity made getting investigations started and reports finished exceedingly difficult. The Canadian commanders therefore, had to

try continually to find new ways of getting the results of their efforts before the Commission for discussion. An example of these efforts occurred in March in Region 7. The Polish and Hungarian delegation withdrew suddenly, without notice, with the excuse that the team site in Tri Ton, a town near the Cambodian border, was not safe. They were indeed being sporadically mortared by PRG elements on the hill overlooking the town. The remaining delegations, Canada and Indonesia, continued their efforts to conduct investigations and prepare reports. These reports were submitted to the Commission where they were heatedly discussed. They were unanimous although only two members participated. The spirited debate on the reports' validity had at least the effect of bringing their contents into the open.

In another case the prohibition of introducing troops into South Vietnam produced a disagreement. When the teams in Regions 6 and 7 were asked by the RVN and JMC to interview detainees alleged to be prisoners of war, only Canada and Indonesia agreed to do so. The prisoners were questioned to establish whether they were indeed DRVN soldiers and whether they had arrived in South Vietnam after the ceasefire. When the reports were submitted, their validity was disputed on the basis of lack of unanimity. Still again, some purpose was achieved by the mere fact that the matter was made public. That these were indeed DRVN soldiers was pretty plain, when, for instance, one of the detainees, who had stated that he was part of an air defence crew, was unable to identify ICCS helicopter markings.

To be concluded in the next issue.



Canadian Land Ordnance Engineers in Vietnam, 1973

By Members of the ICCS (Vietnam) LORE Team

This is the conclusion of an article, the first part of which appeared in the Summer 1975 (Vol. 5, No. 1) issue of this magazine.

Teamsites

The "sharp end" of the ICCS investigations was provided by the 26 Control Teams operating from teamsites throughout Vietnam. The sites were located in provincial capitals and were manned by two members each, of the four participating countries. These small teams were responsible for the conduct of ICCS operations within an area comprising one or two provinces. Three LORE officers participated in the ICCS at teamsite level.

Major Frank Bulmer was detailed to go to Gio Linh, a teamsite in PRG territory on the coast in Region I, just south of the DMZ, the sadly misnamed De-Militarized Zone. In fact, the site was not manned due to a lack of accommodation in the area, which had been heavily bombed prior to the ceasefire. Major Bulmer stayed, with bags packed, in tented accommodation at Quang Tri while preparations continued at Gio Linh. Quang Tri was taken by the North Vietnamese/Viet Cong and retaken by the South Vietnamese forces shortly before the ceasefire. It was destroyed in the process. This resulted in a tense-stalemate with the PRG controlling one bank of the Thach Han River and the RVN the other. Movement was restricted and activity was very limited. This was not a choice teamsite.

Major Don Baldock spent time at two teamsites in Region V, Cu Chi and Tan An, both within a 30-mile drive of Saigon. This area is adjacent to the Mekong Delta and flat and fertile. The RVN maintained good control and travel through the area was unrestricted.

Captain Doug Hamilton spent his tour in Region III at teamsites in Dalat and Phan Rang. Dalat was in the Highlands, at 5,000-foot elevation. This gave it a very comfortable climate when compared with many other sites. Phan Rang was a quiet coastal fishing village. The RVN had tight control of this area and movement was unrestricted.

The activities at the ICCS teamsites varied widely depending on the duties and the conditions prevailing in the area. Major Bulmer was primarily engaged in negotiating the setting up of the Gio Linh point of entry teamsite. This negotiation was carried out across the river which divided the PRG and RVN forces in the area, a very dangerous situation. On one occasion the engine of the ferry boat usually used by the ICCS to cross the river failed and the boat drifted 100 feet downstream from the normal crossing and struck a mine. There were no ICCS aboard at the time, but two people were killed. The importance of this negotiation was borne out by the tragic end to a

reconnaissance flight into a nearby teamsite. This incident and the subsequent investigation demonstrated the need for firm agreement on freedom of movement and radio communication.

Major Baldock and Captain Hamilton were, as said earlier, in areas controlled by the RVN and the incidents there were primarily guerrilla and terrorist attacks. These included ambushes of military patrols, grenade and mortar attacks on villages, and harrasing attacks on bridges and other installations. The civilian casualties inflicted in these attacks were the most disturbing aspects of the investigations. The pointless suffering caused by the war was in grim evidence here. One incident which emphasized this was an explosion which occurred in a churchyard during an Easter concert. Twenty people were killed and over one hundred were injured. More than 90 per cent of these were women and young children.

The conduct of an inquiry was a rather complicated affair. The Paris Agreement gave the ICCS the task of carrying out investigations of alleged violations of the ceasefire but did not detail how this was to be done. Investigations could be requested by any party or could be authorized by the ICCS itself. ICCS Headquarters in Saigon had difficulty in arriving at agreement on

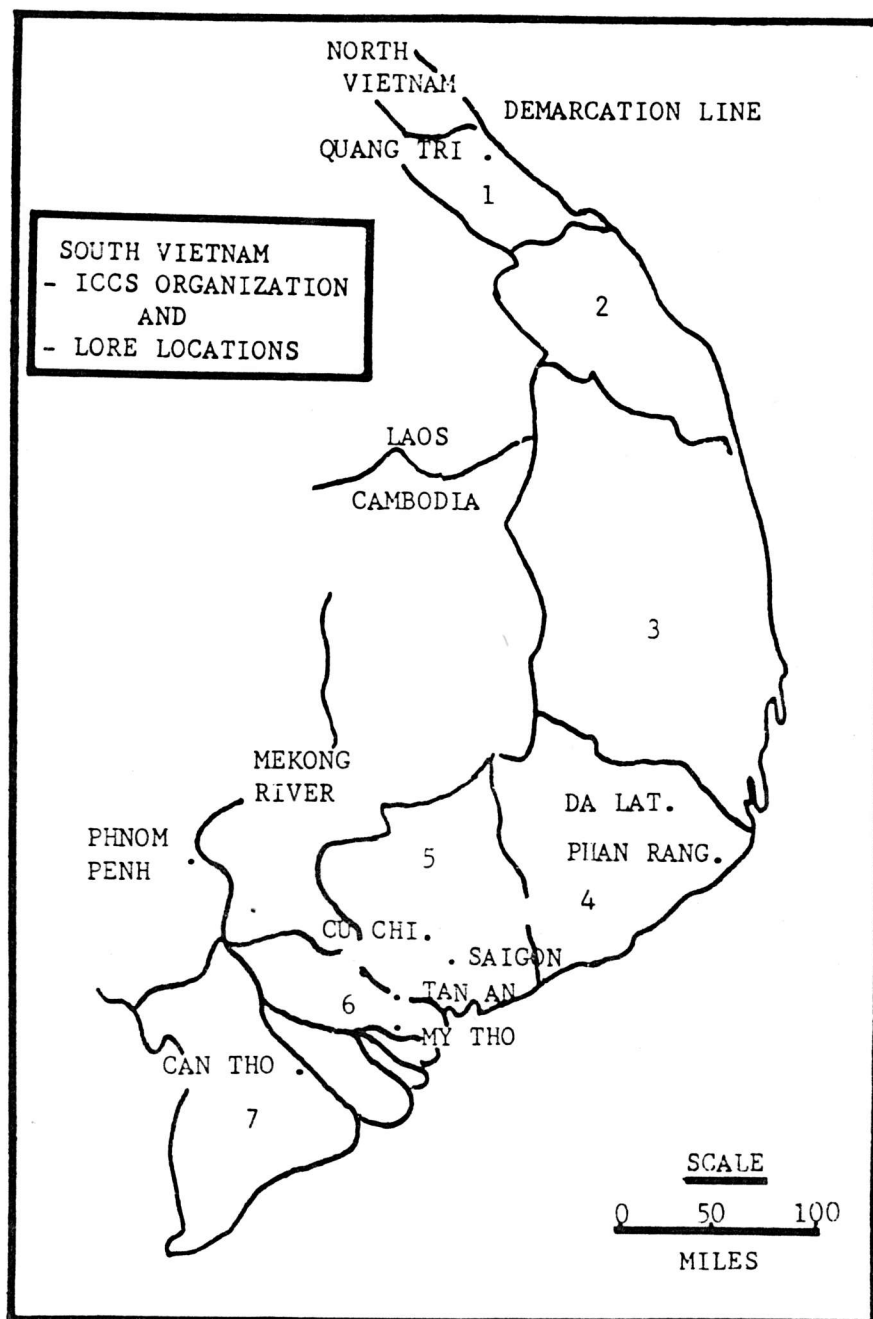
the level at which investigations could be authorized or on firm procedures that were to be followed. This forced Region HQ and teamsites to evolve their own methods. An investigation conducted in Region 4 was typical, and was followed there in other instances, with minor variations. A complaint was received and a meeting was held to discuss the complaint. Recommendations as to whether or not an investigation should be done were prepared by each nation and submitted to the Region HQ. The region commanders would meet to decide if an investigation would be held. If agreement was not reached, the matter was passed to Saigon for decision; if agreement was reached the team was instructed to proceed. To ensure timely observation of evidence, a preliminary observation was carried out prior to the approval of a formal investigation, usually on the same day the complaint was received. The teamsite chairman, a position which rotated weekly, would prepare a detailed plan when ordered to proceed with the investigation. This plan was discussed and each detail agreed to by all. It had to cover such minutiae as the order of march while travelling, questioning procedure, photography, deadlines for reports, and future meeting times. The investigation was then officially carried out as planned. In many cases this brought on large demonstrations with people and banners protesting the incident in question. The show aspects of the investigations seemed as important if not more important to some Vietnamese than the actual results of the investigation.

The chairman would prepare a report of the investigation and a meeting would be held to attempt to approve the report. This seldom, if ever, occurred. Areas where agreement was reached were included as a teamsite report and

annexes were prepared by each country outlining their opinions on points of difference. These reports were reviewed at Region HQ and again in Saigon to attempt to resolve differences. This did not often happen. Finally the reports were submitted to the signatories of the Paris Agreement. The evolution

of this procedure was attended by much frustration. Initially, Poland and Hungary did not investigate for a wide variety of reasons, while Canada and Indonesia maintained that all complaints should be investigated provided safety could be assured. Poland and Hungary eventually followed our example to

ICCS and LORE Locations



the extent even of accompanying us on the preliminary observations. For a short while the ICCS gave the impression of conducting timely investigations into any alleged incident, but with the announcement of Canada's withdrawal things seemed to slow down again.

Support at HQ Level

The logistic support of the Military Component of the Canadian Delegation (MCCD) in South Vietnam was the responsibility of the Deputy Chief of Staff (DCOS) Support and to carry out this task he had a headquarters staff consisting of a Senior Staff Officer (SSO) Technical Services, SSO Support Plans and Co-Ordination, Chief Surgeon, SO Administration and SO Finance, all reporting directly to him. Under the SSO Technical Services were SOs responsible for Construction Engineering, Supply, Maintenance, Transportation, and Base Services. The LORE officers who worked in this headquarters were Colonel Bob Screaton who was DCOS Support during the last two and a half months of the MCCD, Major Duncan McDougall who for the first two weeks was SSO Technical Services and then SSO Support Plans and Co-ordination, and Captain George Godson who was SO Maintenance; and Sergeant Ben Vandersteen and Master-Corporal Peter Zwaagstra worked under Captain Godson.

Logistic planning, which began with the start of initial preparation in NDHQ, continued en route to Saigon. It was expected that the Region Headquarters would be dispatched to their locations on the day we arrived. Therefore, a support plan for deployment and support of the Headquarters was prepared between Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska, where we had a refuelling stop, and Saigon. As it turned out, Regions did not leave until February



Maj.-Gen. Duncan McAlpine, the Commander, addresses MCCD members soon after arrival in Vietnam before deployment to teamsites.

5, 1975. This made it possible to amend and improve the plan using knowledge gained on the ground.

On arrival in Saigon, support for the MCCD turned from theory to practice. The Support Headquarters was set up in a well-worn barracks on Tan Son Nhut Airbase. The staff was very busy organizing our base and making arrangements for the services and equipment needed by the MCCD. In addition, Canada had the Chairmanship of the ICCS for the first month and this meant that we were responsible for the initial logistic arrangements for the other delegations, as well.

Support other than purely Canadian, such as pay, medical and clothing, was provided by civilian contractors. Initially, U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) had the support to the ICCS added to existing U.S. contracts, the main contractor being Pacific Architects and Engineers. With the departure of U.S. Forces, support to ICCS could no longer be provided in this

manner. Therefore the ICCS had to let its own services contract. Canadian support staff prepared specifications, screened tenders, and acted as technical advisors during contract negotiations. Definition of the logistics requirements, which had up to then been mostly *ad hoc*, proved to be an interesting exercise. The requirements document put the ICCS on a sound logistics basis; it could well serve as a reference for those faced with defining contractor support for future peacekeeping operations.

During the first couple of months logistic policy was formulated and decisions made by an Administration and Finance Committee set up by the ICCS Commissioners. It became apparent that the day-to-day management of the Commission's support could not be handled effectively by a committee. By mid-April it was decided to expand the existing ICCS Secretariat to encompass administration, finance, logistics, and locally hired personnel. LORE officers worked in the Directorate of

Personnel and Logistic Services which had the responsibility for managing and tasking the support contractor, and carrying out the common ICCS support services. Colonel M. C. Johnston was for a time in the Directorate, and later Lieutenant-Colonel J. D. McDougall was Deputy Director.

Maintenance

In organizing the MCCD, the planning staff included the function of a SO Maintenance in the establishment of the Canadian delegation. As it turned out Canada was the only member of the ICCS to provide for this function. Therefore, the SO Maintenance, Captain George Godson, found that he was usually acting on behalf of the entire ICCS rather than just the MCCD. Early planning also considered sending Canadian equipment to Vietnam. The final decision, however, was to have equipment provided "in country" by the South Vietnamese Government.

The equipment which the ICCS used included as major items some 700 land vehicles, many with radios, 23 rotary- and fixed-wing aircraft, seven boats of various sizes, ground installation radios, and a large number of generators. This equipment was contractor-operated and maintained. It was located everywhere that there was an ICCS team operating. Several contractors were used. A Contracting Officers' Representative (COR) was provided by the Commission to each contractor to monitor maintenance and/or operation. Captain Godson was appointed COR for the maintenance of Pacific Architects and Engineers (PAE)-operated equipment which included vehicles and generators. He became, *ipso facto*, the Maintenance Liaison Officer for ICCS HQ for this equipment. Hence liaison and inspection, not repair, became the task of Captain Godson and his staff



Colonel M. C. Johnston and ICCS representatives meet local officials in Region IV.

of two vehicle technicians, the already-referred-to Sergeant Ben Vandersteen and Master-Corporal Peter Zwaagstra. It was necessary to set up a fairly comprehensive system of monitoring the contracted maintenance to ensure that it was satisfactorily completed. A sort of Quality Assurance Check system was used to confirm this.

There were many difficulties, one of which, as Sgt. Vandersteen recalls it, was the condition of the vehicles. This was noticed on Day One when he began to pick up the first of the quarter-ton jeeps. These vehicles were issued to the ICCS from the RVN military without any standard of fitness. The condition of some was such that they had piston rods through the cylinder blocks! Other problems that had to be contended with were spare parts, tools, technicians, and transportation and recovery of vehicles.

The contractor had set up workshops in Saigon and in the seven Regions. Therefore, in addition to preparing vehicles for

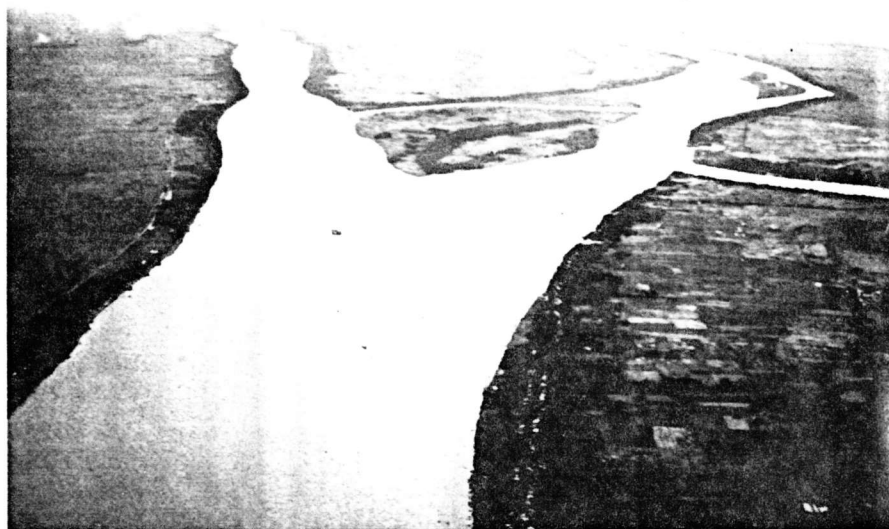
service in Saigon, the three maintainers did a tour to the Regions to assess the condition of vehicles and help in the arrangements for the repair shops. Subsequently, staff visits were conducted on a regular basis to the Regions on a two-week cycle.

One major problem was the continuing lack of spare parts. There were no official channels from which to draw. This left scavenging, black market bartering, and scrounging as the only means of getting the much-needed parts. After one visit to Bien Hoa to the Vietnamese military workshop, which was providing some back-up assistance, it was noticed that some vehicles had been waiting for minor repairs for up to 45 days. All that had been done to them was to remove parts like spare tire and such. Captain Godson paid a liaison visit to the camp commander and soon the vehicles were repaired, complete, and back in operation. The team was also able to scrounge 30 badly needed jeep batteries

against the promise of a small token, a bottle of Canadian whiskey.

The maintenance staff was able to provide help in some unusual ways. While investigating the delays in repairs in the contractor's workshop at Hue, the supervisor complained that the local Vietnamese mechanics would not work for him. Sgt. Vandersteen noted that the supervisor, not being able to speak Vietnamese, used an interpreter to communicate with his men. In broken French, Sgt. Vandersteen was able to speak directly with some of the mechanics. He discovered that they resented this situation and did not apply themselves. He also found that one of the mechanics was a former South Vietnamese army workshop officer. This man was made foreman. In two days all vehicles were on the road and the shop was busy as a bee-hive.

Acquiring and training technicians was difficult. There was a shortage of mechanics. Jobs were scarce, however, in the country and for each job the ICCS had many applicants, not all of whom had the correct qualifications. It was disappointing to discover after a long interview made difficult by language barriers overcome by hand signs, that the candidate for a mechanic's job was really a carpenter. It was also noted that most of the mechanics were not trained to use the latest test equipment and gauges. They turned out to be easy-going and good technicians, however, who could make do and/or patch in order to get along with few parts and tools. One of their innovations, Master-Corporal Zwaagstra noted, was a spark plug electrode protector. This device was used to extend the life of an engine which was burning oil. The electrode did not foul up because it was partially enclosed by the protector.



The eastern branch of the Mekong River just south of the Cambodian border. Region VII is on the left; Region VI, right.

For LORE officers it was very interesting to see how maintenance and repairs were carried out at teamsite level. Vietnamese tradesmen and drivers were not inclined to do a great deal of maintenance, but when things broke down they were very ingenious about fixing them. With the low prevailing labour rates and high parts costs, things were torn down and made to work rather than being replaced. Repairs often took a long time, with parts being built up with a hand torch and hand-filed back into shape. What we would regard as an expedient was often the normal repair method.

The maintenance staff worked hard to set up third-line overhaul for assemblies and vehicles. Not much really came out of these efforts, although, there were few roads and these were crowded, making backloading difficult. Distribution of parts was uneven. The resulting delays and inconvenience didn't warrant the input of time and labour. Therefore, the emphasis remained on local makeshift repairs.

The result was that the vehicles were generally in poor condition, so poor in fact that a replacement program for 300 ICCS jeeps had been considered by the time the Canadians left.

Support at Region Level

The provision of support for the ICCS was a continuing problem in Region 7. On their arrival on February 5, 1973, the Region team was given temporary accommodation at the Can Tho airfield. None of the team-sites were ready. The original plan had been to co-locate JMC and ICCS teams and use existing U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) compounds. This did not materialize, and at the last minute two more sites were required for each location, one for the DRV-N/PRG JMC and one for the ICCS. (The USA/RVN JMC used the MACV compounds.) Hence ICCS compounds had to be literally built

from scratch in a very few weeks. This had recently been a war zone and the Americans were preparing to depart. Therefore, there was a shortage of material. Putting up team-sites was the prime job at the beginning. A Region support committee was formed, comprising the SSOs Support of the four delegations with Canada as the first chairman. This worked well because the Canadians were familiar with U.S. procedures and working with the U.S. military and contractors. The committee quickly agreed upon a simple standard of accommodation (room size, table, chair, fan, dining room, etc.) which expedited construction at team-sites. The committee then conducted the initial reconnaissance of the sites to check progress and give specific directions.

Work progressed to the point where the control teams could be brought to Can Tho Region HQ in mid-February, given a briefing, and then deployed to teamsites in late February. The support briefings were arranged into four parts, each SSO Support being assigned one part and presenting it in his own language.

The next item was hiring local Vietnam staff, secretaries, cooks, waiters, labourers, and such. The departure of the Americans meant the loss of many jobs and consequently, competition for the relatively few the ICCS had to offer was fierce. In the case of the hiring of two secretaries for each delegation we were literally inundated with recommendations from departing U.S. officers to hire theirs. We were unfamiliar with local Vietnam labour laws and since the U.S. Civilian Personnel Officer was still in operation, the region support committee asked him to conduct a competition. He screened all applicants, down to about two dozen candidates, on the basis of typing and language skill. The committee

LORE Locations and Tasks		
Maj F. R. Bulmer	Region 1	Point of Entry Team - Quang Tri
Capt D. R. Hamilton	Region 4	Team Site Officer
Maj D. J. Baldock	Region 5	Team Site Officer
LCol F. W. Chapman	HQ MCCD	Operations Staff
LCol J. D. McDougall	Planning Staff HQ MCCD	Support Staff - ICCS Secretariat
Capt G. W. Godson	Planning Staff HQ MCCD	Advance Party, Rear Party Maintenance Staff
WO B. J. Vandersteen	HQ MCCD	Maintenance Staff
MCpl P. Zwaagstra	HQ MCCD	Maintenance Staff
Col R. B. Screaton	Planning Staff Region 6 HQ MCCD	Final Report Commander Support Staff
Col. M. C. Johnston	Region 7 HQ MCCD Region 6	Support Staff, Commander ICCS Secretariat Commander
Maj R. P. Britt	Region 7	Support Staff, Point of Entry Team - Can Tho

then sat as a panel to interview each candidate and make selections. Major Peter Britt succeeded to the position of SSO Support the morning of the day the panel convened. He acknowledges that it was a pleasant introduction to his new job. The panel was able to arrive at their selection amicably and the new secretaries started to work the next day at their new jobs.

After the Americans left, support activity settled into a continuing grind of trying to get improvements. Lack of material, money, labour, and results from the contractor, were constant problems. The need for concerted action by the Region Support Committee seemed to fall off and it became more or less dormant. The actual need for support continued, however, and

the Canadian SSO Support became by default the Region Support Officer. The Region Executive Committee recognized this and appointed him Region contact officer with the contractor. He also became camp commandant for the region HQ.

A Pleasant Interlude: Celebrating the Corps Birthday

The RCEME Corps birthday provided a reason for the LORE group to have a get-together. Such opportunities were rare and everyone was able to take advantage of it. From all over South Vietnam they gathered *en masse* in

Saigon May 15 for the celebration of RCEME's 29th anniversary. It started at the Tan Son Nhut mess where a reception was held for the guests of the evening, the guest of honour being the commander, Major-General Duncan McAlpine. After cutting the traditional birthday cake, the group moved to the *La Cigale* restaurant for a gala dinner party. The food was delicious, the birthday cake superb, the wine abundant, but alas the band could only play *Auprès de ma blonde*. This party marked a high point for us. Full attendance and a gala function set a high standard for others to follow.

Withdrawal and Rear Party

By the end of May we were officially told that Canada would withdraw from Vietnam by July 31. This did not come as a surprise and the machinery was quickly set up to prepare a plan of withdrawal. Colonel Bob Screaton was moved

into HQ MCCD to become DCOS Support. His prime task, however, was withdrawal planning. A very comprehensive plan was prepared and was accepted by both Canadian military and civilian officials. It included the time-phased movement of Canadian personnel from the teamsites, and then the migration of all Canadians to Tan Son Nhut where facilities were prepared to process everyone through supply, transport, administration, medical, etc. This plan was not without a few problems. The most noteworthy one came three days before departure when one of our C-130 Hercules went unserviceable in Japan. Since Canadians were to be out of South Vietnam by midnight, on the last of July, it was necessary to make a plan quickly to move our equipment to Clark Airbase in the Philippines. Captain Godson and two supply NCOs accompanied the 25,000 pounds of military stores to Clark, and six days later left for Canada. As soon as the Canadians arrived home, a small group including Colonel Screaton started preparing

the final report of the ICCS. It was finished by the time Captain Godson reported into NDHQ and made the final entry in the ICCS Peace Diary, thus closing the activities of LORE in the Far East.

Summing Up

LORE members participated in this operation from the start to the finish. One was the first on the ground and the last home. Another was involved from the start of planning to the completion of the final report. Others had tasks in a wide range of activities. Personnel selected for one job were suddenly thrust into another. Their success and the success of this operation has its roots in wide experience, knowledge and training of individual members. The main lesson to be gained, perhaps, is the continued validity of the requirement for general military preparedness by every member of the Forces.



FROM THE EDITOR

Continued from page 6

destroyers at \$75 million a piece, which are no doubt splendid ASW platforms but are under-powered, under-equipped and above all under-gunned for most other types of naval operations. It does not, in my humble opinion, justify us going for LRPA's that will cost between \$50 and \$60 million a copy only because they are to be the last word in ASW, especially if that high price tag could well result in the Canadian Forces not getting at all the kind of big, modern aircraft the sorely need for other missions.

I may be entirely wrong, of course, as Commander Burke may be wrong. That concentration on ASW may not be just a throwback from the past, a sentimental clinging

to the memory of old victories. I, for one, would like nothing better than to have proven to me that I am mistaken. What is unacceptable is the proposition that something is thus simply because it always has been thus.

The Passing of an Air Pioneer

Shortly after Air Marshal Leckie (who is remembered in this issue in a major article) another of the originals of military aviation in Canada passed away, Air Commodore J. Stanley Scott. Originally an artillery officer, he transferred to the Royal Flying Corps in 1915. After a distinguished career in the First World War he became, in 1919,

the first Controller of Civil Aviation in Canada, under the newly formed Air Board, and subsequently, when the Royal Canadian Air Force was created in 1924, its first Director. Out of the Service for some 10 years, he returned to it at the outbreak of the Second World War. He was then in his early fifties. There followed a most valuable contribution to the success of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, and then final retirement from the RCAF in 1945.

Air Commodore Scott gave to military aviation in Canada most of his best years and all his heart. He was 86 when he died in Halifax, N.S. He will be gratefully remembered.

JOHN GELLNEF